

EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM BROCHURE

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) welcomes you to the United States. We are pleased to receive you as an exchange visitor. This brochure is designed to help you understand the purpose and operation of the Exchange Visitor Program and to introduce you to the major requirements of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations that are most relevant to you.

THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

DOS administers the overall Exchange Visitor Program which implements the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. The Act promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The Exchange Visitor Program provides foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States and then return home to share their experiences.

Sponsors - DOS designates sponsors to administer individual exchange visitor programs. Sponsors are U.S. organizations such as government agencies, educational and cultural organizations, and corporations. Sponsors provide exchange visitors with pre-arrival information, offer orientation, and monitor the activities of their program participants.

Sponsors offer exchange visitors cross-cultural activities to expose them to American society, culture, and institutions. Exchange visitors are encouraged to participate voluntarily in such activities to share with Americans the language, culture, and history of their home country.

Responsible Officers - Sponsors appoint responsible officers and alternate responsible officers to advise and assist exchange visitors, issue Certificates of Eligibility (Forms IAP-66), and conduct official communications with DOS. When questions arise on the regulations, the initial and primary contact for exchange visitors should be with the responsible officer.

Exchange Visitor - An exchange visitor is a foreign national who has been selected by a sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program. The exchange visitor enters the United States on J-1 visa. Any accompanying spouse and unmarried children under 21 years of age may apply for J-2 visas.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

As an exchange visitor, it is important that you know your obligations under the Exchange Visitor Program regulations and, through contact with the responsible officer, keep abreast of any changes in the regulations. Listed below are brief descriptions of major requirements of these regulations and how you can locate them.

Activities and Program Provisions - Exchange visitors come to the United States to participate in a particular program category such as a trainee, teacher, college or university student, or short-term scholar. Exchange visitors are required to engage in the category and subject or field of activity listed on their Form IAP-66 (e.g., professor, mathematics.) Compensation for such activities may be accepted only when permitted by the regulations. Exchange visitors also must comply with the specific program provisions of the regulations that deal with their particular program category.

Insurance - Exchange visitors are required to have medical insurance in effect for themselves and any accompanying spouse and dependents on J visas.

- (A) *Minimum Coverage*--At a minimum, insurance shall cover:
- (1) medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per person per accident or illness;
 - (2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500; and
 - (3) expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of \$10,000.
- (B) *Additional Terms*--A policy secured to fulfill the insurance requirements shall not have a deductible that exceeds \$500 per accident or illness and must meet other standards specified in the regulations.
- (C) *Maintenance of Insurance*--Exchange visitors must maintain the required insurance during the duration of their program. Some sponsors provide the required insurance for exchange visitors. Other sponsors may help locate insurance that exchange visitors may purchase. For further details, consult with your responsible officer at the start of your exchange program.

Two-year Home-country Physical Presence Requirement – Certain Exchange Visitor Program participants and family members must return home for at least two years after completing their educational or cultural program before they can change or adjust to certain nonimmigrant or immigrant statuses. This requirement applies to those

- (1) whose exchange visitor program has been financed to some extent by the U.S. Government or their home country,
- (2) whose skills are needed by their home country as indicated in the Exchange Visitor Skills List, or
- (3) whose purpose in coming to the United States is to receive graduate medical education or training.

Grounds for applying for a waiver of this requirement are limited. For details, see the regulations and your responsible officer.

Transfers and Extensions - Exchange visitors may transfer from one sponsor to another only if they are released by the first sponsor as required by the regulations. Also, an exchange visitor's program may be extended at the sponsor's discretion to the extent permitted by the regulations. Sufficient funds must be available for support of the exchange visitor and family members if a new Form IAP-66 is to be issued.

Maintenance of Status - Exchange visitors are required to have a valid, unexpired Form IAP-66. Exchange visitors may have their exchange program terminated for violating these regulations or the sponsor's rules governing their particular program.

For example, an exchange visitor is subject to termination as a participant in the exchange visitor program if he or she willfully fails to maintain the insurance coverage required under the regulations, engages in unauthorized employment, or fails to pursue the activities permitted under his or her program and category.

Notification - Exchange visitors should inform their responsible officer when they are withdrawing from or completing the program early, to assist sponsors in complying with their notification and reporting requirements.

Current Regulations - The Exchange Visitor Program regulations are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, 22 C.F.R. Part 514. Major revisions were published in the Federal Register on March 19, 1993 (58 FR 15180). These regulations are generally available for review at the offices of responsible officers and at university, law school, or large public libraries.

For Further Information - There are additional requirements set forth in the Exchange Visitor Program regulations that apply to you. For further information, review a copy of the current regulations and consult with your responsible officer.

If exchange visitors need to communicate with the United States Department of State about the Exchange Visitor Program, they should contact:

U.S. Department of State
Exchange Visitor Program
State Annex 44
301 4th Street, S.W., Room 734
Washington, DC 20547
(202) 401-9810